



STB keeps Victory Corps moving smoothly

Warfighter gives unit the opportunity to hone skills

*Story by Sgt. Peter K. Towse
138th MPAD, New York National Guard*

From clerks to cooks, mechanics to doctors, cavalry scouts to aviation pilots, there is a lot that goes on at V Corps' Special Troops Battalion.

"We are logistically big," said Maj. Crystal Blackdeer, the STB's training and operations officer. "We are taking care of over 600 soldiers here at Grafenwoehr. We have trucks, trailers, tents, technologically complicated equipment, civilians and civilian contractors."

The mission of STB is to move V Corps headquarters, set up a life-support area, and sustain a command post for the duration of the mission.

"Warfighter gives Lt. Col. Robert Shaw, STB commander, a chance to exercise his staff with slice elements of major subordinate commands that make up the main and tactical command posts," Blackdeer said.

"This doesn't happen on an everyday basis back in garrison," added Blackdeer. "The exercise gets us everyday visibility on the rhythms and personalities of the other units such as 205th Military Intelligence Brigade, V Corps Artillery and the 22nd Signal Brigade."

"During Warfighter, we use warfighting skills such as reporting, tracking and planning. We conduct Warfighters so we can be experts in wartime."

"STB consists of a whole lot of folks with over 80 military occupational skills," Blackdeer said. "We get a chance to come out and hone our tactical operations center and test our ability to stay tied in with the rear detachment in Heidelberg."

Whether it means tracking personnel moves or getting supplies moved out here, STB does all of the reporting with the rear detachment.

"We also test communication links between the battalion and the company. We have found that our soldiers perform their jobs efficiently and with ease," Blackdeer explained.

"The most satisfying part of this job for me is the trust gained by the troops we support. That is what we're here for. We keep the wheels moving," she said.

Warfighters of the Day



photo by Spc. Kathleen Edgcomb, 138th MPAD, New York National Guard
Soldiers of the 11th Aviation Regiment reposition their mess tent in preparation of Warfighter. Based in Illsheim, Germany, the unit has been training for Urgent Victory 2002 since January.

War in our living rooms

Civilian media a reality on today's battlefield

*Story by Sgt. Chris Dunphy
35th Infantry Division*

"We don't just focus on fighting the battle; we look at all aspects of modern warfare," said Maj. Jeffrey Wingo, about the growing relevance of addressing civilian media presence on the battlefield.

Wingo, public affairs observer-controller for the Battle Command Training Program from Fort Leavenworth, Kan., is in Grafenwoehr, Germany for

V Corps' Warfighter exercise. Warfighter is a computer-driven simulated battle exercise created to give commanders and their staffs training in modern warfare without the cost of maneuvering troops in a field environment.

During the exercise, Wingo said, BCTP's OCs address how commanders handle the press as well as the enemy --whom some commanders view as one and the same.

In the simulated battle environment of Urgent Victory commanders are presented with a

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room full of media role players--many of them retired officers and senior NCOs with extensive military public affairs experience--and peppered with questions regarding Warfighter's progress.

Wingo said sometimes the media's questions can be aggressive, but like in the real world of media surveillance, each reporter's approach is personality-driven, and meant only to duplicate reality.

At the end of each day the media role players produce a newsletter called the Warbird, reporting on their interviews throughout the day. The articles give

commanders and their staffs ideas on how their handling of the press can be interpreted, both positively and negatively.

Wingo hopes the leaders of today's military will accept the inevitability of media interaction during battle, and how important it is to create an open and accessible relationship.

"Media on the battlefield is a reality," Wingo said. "Commanders, and their soldiers, regardless of rank, must be proactive and willing to engage the press."

He said if the Army is not willing to tell its own story, others will.

THE SOLDIERS OF URGENT VICTORY



photo by Sgt. Tim Mills
135th MPAD, Iowa National Guard

Sgt. Maj. Donald Bracey, operations sergeant major for the 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade in Giebelstadt, Germany, on his role at V Corps Warfighter exercise Urgent Victory 2002: "My role is to set up the tactical operations center itself, man the crews, make sure their communications are working, their power, generators...you name it, I do it. This is my operation. My house!"



photo by Sgt. Tim Mills, 135th MPAD, Iowa National Guard

Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace, commanding general of V Corps (right) and Lt. Col. Joseph Richard, public affairs officer, V Corps, answer questions from media role players at a press conference held at the Grafenwoehr Training Area.

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Urgent Victory
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VANGUARD is an authorized publication for participants in exercise Warfighter 2002. VANGUARD is published daily under the supervision of the V Corps Public Affairs Office to provide exercise participants with news and information on the people, events, policies and operations of, and associated with, Warfighter 2002, as well as current world affairs. The contents of VANGUARD are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government or the Department of the Army. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the V Corps Public Affairs Officer.